

OFFICES:

Gillette 307-682-6268  
Cheyenne 307-772-2477  
Casper 307-261-6572  
Cody 307-527-9444  
Jackson 307-739-9507  
D.C. 202-224-3424  
website enzi.senate.gov

*United States Senate*

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-5004

MICHAEL B. ENZI  
WYOMING

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February 23, 2017

Dr. Thomas Price  
Secretary  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Elizabeth DeVos  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Price and Secretary DeVos,

A report issued in 2012 by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) stated "the federal investment in early learning and child care is fragmented in that it is administered through 45 programs that provide or may support related services to children from birth through age 5, as well as five tax provisions that subsidize private expenditures in this area. The programs are concentrated within the Departments of Education (Education) and Health and Human Services (HHS) – the principal administrators of the federal government's early learning and child care programs – but are also administered by the Departments of Agriculture, the Interior, Justice, Labor, Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the General Services Administration, and the Appalachian Regional Commission."

In the same report, GAO stated that "coordinating the administration and evaluation of early learning and child care programs can help mitigate the effects of program fragmentation and overlap and potentially help bridge service gaps; however, there is currently no federal interagency workgroup that coordinates early learning and child care efforts across all federal agencies with such programs."

Both the Child Care and Development Block Grant (P.L. 113-186) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (P.L. 114-95) include provisions that seek to address the overlap and fragmentation reported by the GAO by requiring reviews of early learning programs, plans to eliminate overlap and fragmentation, and then reports to Congress on the status of those efforts. I ask that you give due attention to the provisions in those laws and begin the consolidation and elimination process to ensure that students are best served by well-coordinated programs.

While I believe that funding wisely invested in early learning and child care programs is a benefit to our Nation and saves taxpayers later on, there is important work to be done in order to ensure that the federal programs we invest in are not fragmented or overlapping.

I thank you for your attention to this matter and I look forward to your progress updates.

Sincerely,

*Michael B. Enzi*